Narrative

“Open up your mind, let your fantasies unwind. In this darkness that you know you cannot fight. The darkness of the music of the night.” That was it, I was hooked. At the age of 17 I found myself totally enthralled with Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *The Phantom of the Opera*. The tragic story touched me deeply and brought out in me my creative side. I felt so bad for the Phantom’s loss of love, that I felt compelled to write him a new ending. One, that would give him at least some sense of resolution.

This “inspiration” brought me into the realms of a rather whimsical (and sometimes scary) world known as “fan fiction.” This was a place where people could share their writings about their favorite movies, books, plays, etc., and read other people’s stories about their favorite characters. For a teenager, it presented an amazing outlet to speak and be heard. (add more)

As for me, I was one of those rare happy teenagers. However, I had never been able to really have an outlet for my creative writing. I had only written a couple short stories, and they were only for my English classes. Fan fiction was a whole other world, safe from the critical pen of the teacher.

Needless to say, with my new found inspiration I started writing story after story utilizing the characters from *The Phantom of the Opera*. The turning point for me, however, came when I discovered there was a “morbidity writing contest.” I decided to compete and began reading the work of Edgar Allan Poe for further inspiration into this gothic tradition. I had enjoyed writing darker stories before, but Poe helped me develop and practice writing in this particular genre.

I quickly found a poem that was perfect and became the backdrop for my story. It had the same feeling that I was trying to impart about my story, and fit in very well with the Phantom story line. This is what I used to begin: (describe further)

Mimes, in the form of God on high,

Mutter and mumble low,

And hither and thither fly:

Mere puppets they, who come and go

At bidding of vast formless things

That shift the scenery to and fro,

Flapping from out their condor wings

Invisible Woe.

Armed with Poe, I wrote a story utilizing Poe’s unique writing style and hit the submit button after several tortuous writing days. I took this very seriously, and tried to create something new that had not been attempted before by other writers. This was my turning point. People who were reading the contest entries began to give me amazing feedback and filled me with confidence. I began to feel that writing was something I could consider as a serious opportunity for myself, not just as something for a class. I ended up winning the contest. That is when I knew I wanted to be a serious writer. Also, I came to find I enjoyed the time I spent being tortured with the writing process. To me, that was the true test of whether I was a writer or not. (add)

I have never forgotten that moment in my life, and I always remember that as the day I became I serious writer. I owe it all to the gothic writers of Leroux and Poe. I am happy to say that I don’t write stories dripping with blood as much as I did, but I still find them very fun to write. Maybe Poe inspired me more than I think.